



# KRISTIANSEN

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

### 2004 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

FROM REP. DAN KRISTIANSEN – 39<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

Dear Friends and Neighbors

*This legislative update provides information on the 2004 session. It highlights progress made and work still to be done by the Legislature. Thank you so much for all your emails, letters, calls and visits. It's an honor to serve and represent you.*

*My goal is to create solutions and solve problems to improve our lives and our communities. You can help me identify the challenges that face us. Please keep your communications coming. It helps me do a better job for you.*

Sincerely,

Dan Kristiansen

#### HOW TO REACH ME

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<http://hrc.leg.wa.gov/members/kristiansen.htm>

#### COMPROMISE BUDGET THAT WORKS

I worked to bring state government spending under control and avoid the need for a general fund tax increase at a time when families are already struggling under a heavy tax burden. I'm pleased the Legislature passed a sustainable 2004 state budget that didn't raise taxes, didn't cut core programs and left more than \$300 million in reserves for unexpected expenses.

#### HELP FOR SENIORS WITH HEALTH CARE COSTS

I introduced legislation which was passed and signed into law by the governor. It will save seniors hundreds of dollars per year – up to approximately \$300 – reducing the cost of Medicare Supplement insurance. Effective immediately and in time for annual renewals, it restores to seniors their discounts for various payment methods, including electronic fund transfers, annual installments and spouses.

Seniors came up with the idea for the legislation, seniors lobbied for it and



the state's largest senior organization, AARP Washington, endorsed it. It's a great example of how the people we represent as legislators can make a difference in their own lives and the lives of others throughout the state. I look forward to continuing the fight for more affordable health insurance for everyone.

*Constituents Charlotte and Bill Faust, who Rep. Kristiansen serves in his Northwest Washington District. With their help, Rep. Kristiansen crafted and introduced a legislative solution to preserve important health care coverage discounts for seniors.*

#### PROPERTY TAXES

I want to do all I can to help everyone, including seniors, protect their homes. A new law I supported increases the amount of money seniors can earn and still be eligible for property tax exemptions. If you're on a fixed income and have a disability, you should now get more relief from high property taxes. I'll continue working to create even more much deserved breaks like this for seniors and others in our communities.

#### BETTER TOOLS FOR TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND PARENTS

We made improvements to the WASL that require clear achievement standards for students and create individual education plans for children with disabilities. This law gives students new opportunities to learn and enables them to graduate with the knowledge and skills that will help them succeed. It also makes sure teachers receive clearer academic standards so they can do an even better job helping all students learn what they need to know.

All of this helps the next generation to successfully enter the work force and become contributing members of society. In the future, I would like to see more existing funds reach the classroom, students and teachers.

TOLL-FREE LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE: 1 - 800 - 562 - 6000

# REPRESENTATIVE DAN KRISTIANSEN

## IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION AT HOME



We passed legislation to help solve some of our community's

largest transportation challenges. Highway 9 became a "highway of statewide significance" due to a bill I supported. This frees up federal funds to help pay for safety improvements and expansion of Highway 9.

The 2004 transportation budget the Legislature passed will fund further expansion of Highway 522, and improve this main arterial between Monroe and the east side. My continued involvement with this important local transportation issue will ensure your tax dollars are spent on much needed local relief.

## GOOD NEWS IN GRANITE FALLS

Another local high-priority project, the Granite Falls local freight mobility plan, will receive \$1.8 million for the purchase of land necessary to obtain rights of way and construct a bypass. The majority of gravel products being used in Northwest Washington are being trucked through downtown Granite Falls. A bypass is long overdue and I'm pleased we're dealing with this issue now to address immediate concerns and improve the quality of life in Granite Falls.

## GOOD NEWS IN SMOKEY POINT

Work is now completed to fund and start construction on the 172<sup>nd</sup> Street overpass on Interstate 5. This is due to great cooperation among local, state and federal agencies and local residents.

These are but a few of the many safety and improvement projects that the Legislature approved this year for Skagit and Snohomish counties.

## CREATING AND PROTECTING JOBS

The rich heritage and job base for our rural district was founded upon timber jobs and later, Boeing jobs, which have now been severely eroded. Our priority must continue to be protecting current jobs and attracting new ones. Our local unemployment numbers reflect this poor job climate, and are higher than the state average. More must be done to grow our economy and help attract and keep family-wage jobs at home.

- We passed legislation that will continue tax-incentives designed to attract employers and investments to rural counties of Washington, including Skagit and Snohomish. This legislation ensures the vitality of existing employers that are currently in rural Northwest Washington and gives incentive for prospective employers to relocate here and bring jobs with them.
- Last year, great strides were made to keep Boeing manufacturing jobs here in Washington. Now, work needs to be done to improve the business climate for every other employer who provides jobs, regardless of the size. The state must become more nationally and internationally competitive at keeping and attracting employers.
- The Legislature made a **small step** in the right direction by passing small group insurance reform with the goal of giving small employers and working families the option of affordable health insurance. What did not materialize this session is comprehensive tort reform to

control liability insurance costs for doctors, employers and local government, while at the same time protecting patients, customers and employees.

## PROTECTING CHILDREN

The most gratifying success this session was passing a law that toughens penalties for



child molesters. A great injustice in our current law involves loopholes that allow child rapists to be released without prison time – often to repeat their horrific crimes against other innocent victims.

To protect children, we passed a law to reform SSOSA (*Special Sex Offender Sentencing Alternatives*) so that child molesters would be locked up and separated from their victims. The new law puts justice back into our system by increasing punishment for child molesters and giving victims and their families more rights.

**There is more work to be done in Olympia. Funding for education, transportation, health care and social and human services all depend upon a healthy job base. A robust economy is vital to supporting the quality of life we desire. I will continue to fight for citizens, and help create solutions and solve problems in these areas.**

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